

2013

*Effects, challenges and possibilities
for using EU funds for
improvement of status and social
integration of Roma and Egyptians
population in Montenegro*

This publication was prepared within the project PGF Montenegro, funded by Open Society Foundation from Budapest and implemented in partnership with CEDEM, NGO Humanitarian and Centre for Roma Initiatives. The project is part of the MTM program (Making the most of the EU funds for Roma) and it's aimed at improving the availability and accessibility of EU funds for the benefit of Roma civil society organizations and the inclusion of Roma into Montenegrin society.

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1. Introduction

Geographical position of Montenegro and historical circumstances on the end of 20th century has created significant migratory movements which resulted with very serious problems for Roma and Egyptian (RE) population in the Montenegrin society. According to the existing and available data from the 2011¹ census, total population in Montenegro amounts 620.029. Out of total number of RE persons – 8305, 6251 persons or 1.01% of total population are Roma people, while Egyptian population counts 2054 persons or 0.33% of total population. 5169 persons indicated Roma language as their maternal tongue. Also, here important to say is that Roma and Egyptian community is in the most unfavorable position among all other minority groups and minority ethnic communities in Montenegro. The low level of economic power and education, a small number of employees, inadequate housing conditions, social rejection combined with the generally prevailing stereotypes and prejudice further complicate the status of this population in the Montenegrin society. Given the well-known events and consequences of the war in the former Yugoslavia at the end of the 20th century, the arrival of a significant number of displaced Roma and Egyptians has further worsened the overall social and economic status of this population in Montenegro.

2. Socio-economic status of RE population in Montenegro

National policies in this area in the previous period have not shown adequate maturity and effectiveness to solve the problems of Roma and Egyptian population. This is additionally confirmed in the Strategy for improving of the RE position in Montenegro 2012-2016, where there is clear indication that *the most of the RE population still lives in the conditions of extreme poverty and very low standard, especially in the sanitary and hygienically sense, large number does not possess personal documents, health and social insurance and has very poor education. Considerable number doesn't speak official language and only few have elementary education*

¹ Source MONSTAT

with very limited possibilities to improve this. Most of the RE population is unemployed and the employed ones do the least qualified and paid jobs or earn the minimal wages doing self-taught crafts and skills which puts them in the inconvenient and uncompetitive position in the labour market.²

On the other hand, European integration, as one of prevailing foreign policy orientations of Montenegro, has imposed the need to approach this problem in more serious and constructive manner. A sustainable solution in this regard can be sought through the usage of the EU funds for financing relevant projects for RE population and improvement of their living standard. Opinion of the European Commission on the request of Montenegro for membership in the EU³ confirms the significance of the EU funds for this purpose, as one of the key seven recommendations states that it is necessary to *implement the legal and policy framework on anti-discrimination in line with European and international standards; guarantee the legal status of displaced persons, in particular Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, and ensure respect for their rights. This will include the adoption and implementation of a sustainable strategy for the closure of the Konik camp.* In the upcoming period it is necessary to mobilize all available national resources and capacities in order to create preconditions for sustainable usage of the EU funds (primarily the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA) in the government and non-governmental sector. This goal can be achieved if significant efforts are made to meet the necessary prerequisites regarding the institutional structures responsible for the implementation of the EU funded projects in Montenegro, but also to strengthen cooperation with NGOs.

Additional confirmation of the necessity of the EU funds for this purpose is a statement in Strategy for improving of the RE position in Montenegro 2012-2016 that undertaken measures and activities aimed at improving the situation of Roma and Egyptians resulted in a significant

² Strategy for improving of the RE position in Montenegro 2012-2016, official document of Government of Montenegro

³ Brussels, 9.11. 2010, COM(2010) 670

and visible, but not sufficient positive changes. Also, although certain results have been achieved in the implementation of the Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Montenegro and Strategy for Improving the Position of RAE Population in Montenegro 2008-2012, the expected progress in terms of improving the overall situation of the Roma and Egyptian communities as a group has missed out.

3. Pre-Accession Assistance in Montenegro in the period 2007-2013

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is the comprehensive continuation of previous EU instruments for assistance to the states in the EU accession process (CARDS, PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD, Instrument for Turkey). During the EU financing perspective 2007-2013, pre-accession assistance is structured in a way which creates conditions for providing assistance in all key areas for successful continuation of the EU integration process and it is divided in five components: Component I (Transition Assistance and Institution Building); Component II (Cross-border cooperation); Component III (Regional development); Component IV (Human resources development) and Component V (Agriculture and rural development). Beside the significant assistance that Montenegro receives on national level, the EU funds *Multi-beneficiary Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (MB IPA)* for implementation of regional projects which deal with common problems of Western Balkan countries and Turkey in the EU integration process.

So far, Montenegro received assistance in 236.625.200 €⁴ for the period of financing perspective 2007-2013, on the national level. Most of this amount is allocated for the projects of Component I (166.703.056 €). The rest of the amount - 30.065.037 € goes for Component II. Reason why the most of the funds are allocated for components I and II lies in a fact that, until December 2010, Montenegro as a country with status of potential candidate for the EU could only use IPA funds through these two components. With the achievement of the candidate country status, Montenegro became eligible to use funds for components III, IV and V, where

⁴ Source: Revised Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework for 2012-2013; COM(2011) 641 final

total allocations amount 23.200.000 €, 5.757.077€ and 10.900.000 € in the given order. However, additional precondition for the operational usage of funds from components III, IV and V is the decentralization of management of the EU funds in Montenegro.

Independently of the funds that Montenegro gets through national IPA, the European Commission is conducting programming and implements regional projects through MB IPA instrument. MB IPA budget is joint for all Western Balkan countries and Turkey and it is several times bigger than the national one. For the period 2007-2013, multi-beneficiary programmes provided assistance in 1.159.559.317 €. It is important to emphasize that these are regional projects aiming to treat the common needs of all countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey in the EU accession process.

In the previous period, part of the special allocation within the component I of national IPA programme and MB IPA together with the funds from *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights* (EIDHR), were used for supporting projects of civil society organisations in Montenegro. An additional important source of funding for civil society organizations are cross-border and transnational programs implemented through the IPA Component II.

Planning of the EU financing support on national level is a joint task of Government of Montenegro, European Commission and the Delegation of European Union to Montenegro. The whole process of defining the purpose of spending the funds, generating projects ideas, formulating project proposals is a part of project cycle which is commonly called *programming*. Programming of the IPA component I is done by the line ministries with the support of National IPA Coordinator Office and the European Commission. In the previous period, funds from Component I are mainly programmed on annual basis and after are joined into annual IPA programmes. Programming for Component II is totally different from Component I because funds are being granted for the individual small scale projects within calls for project proposals for each cross-border programme separately.

Programming of IPA Component I on national level is mainly done in advance and it is finished concluding with 2013. It means that funds are already allocated for concrete projects.

Additional funds for institutional capacity building policy area will be available only through the allocation for 2014. Programming of IPA component II for bilateral cross-border programmes is ongoing and it will be done through calls for project proposals.

Programming of funds for components III and IV is very similar to programming of the EU structural funds. In Montenegro for the funds which are allocated for 2012 and 2013, Strategic Coherence Framework and Operational Programmes⁵ are designed and approved by the European Commission. Implementation of these programmes will start after the decentralization of management for these two components. Special chance for financing the projects in the area of social inclusion of RE population will be projects within Component IV where special grant schemes for the support to the employment and social inclusion of RE population are planned. In the Operational Programme for IPA component IV, the amount of 5.583.000 € was envisaged, while the national co-financing amounts 985.235 €. This makes the total funding support of 6.568.235 €. The overall objective of the Operational Programme for IPA component IV is to promote the sustainable development of human resources development and modernization of education, training and research in Montenegro in accordance with the policies and standards of the EU and with a particular focus on the employability of young people. Allocated funds under IPA Component IV will be used for projects that will be an opportunity for further improvement of RE population position, particularly in the following priority areas and measures of the operational programme:

- Priority Axis 1: Effective and inclusive active labour market measures
 - Measure 1.1: Support the implementation of the most effective labour market measures for the quality of the labour force and employment.
- Priority Axis 2: Improving knowledge, skills and competencies for employability and competitiveness
 - Measure 2.1: Supporting improvement of conditions for the development of qualifications in vocational education and training;

⁵ Available at the official web site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro

- Measure 2.2: Supporting improvement of the innovative capacity of higher education, research and industry.
- Priority Axis 3: Improving the social inclusion
- Measure 3.1. Supporting greater access to the labour market for persons with disabilities and members of the RE population.

The EU Pre-accession Assistance funds in Montenegro are spent according to the rules of centralised management system. It means that all procedures related to the contracting and disbursement within the EU funded projects is done by the European Commission via the Delegation of European Union to Montenegro. Process of decentralisation of management system is ongoing for all five IPA components. Decentralization process means gradual capacity building of Montenegrin institutions and implementing the EU procedures related to the independent management of the EU funds with ex-ante control of the European Commission. Decentralized management system includes a special institutional structure that is established in accordance with the rules defined in the EU regulations for the implementation of IPA.

In addition to the support received through the above mentioned instruments, Montenegro is currently participating in seven programs of the European Union:

1) Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7) which connects all key EU initiatives in the field of research and development. The program provides support in four key thematic areas: Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities. For each of these areas, there is a special program in line with the main areas of the EU research policy. Ministry of Science is responsible for the activities within the FP7 program. Montenegro participates in the FP7 program since 2008.

2) Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation - Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP - EIP), through which the European Union supports the innovation and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially in the areas of investment in innovation, SME cooperation, eco-innovation, promoting entrepreneurial and

innovative culture. Ministry of Economy is responsible for the activities of the CIP – EIP. Montenegro participates in the CIP - EIP since 2008.

3) The objective of the Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation - ICT Policy Support Programme (CIP ICT - PSP) is to support innovation and competitiveness through the widespread use and improved quality of use of information technologies by citizens and small and medium enterprises. Activities under the CIP ICT PSP are coordinated by the Ministry for Information Society and Telecommunications. Montenegro participates in the CIP ICT-PSP program since 2011.

4) The purpose of Culture Programme is to improve cultural cooperation among the countries that under this programme. Ministry of Culture is responsible for the activities under this instrument. Montenegro participates in the Culture Programme since 2010.

5) The Customs Programme supports customs administrations of the candidate and potential candidate countries and provides support for cooperation in the fight against customs fraud and crime. Montenegro participates in the Customs Programme since 2011.

6) Europe for Citizens aims at promoting the concept of “active European citizenship” and supports the involvement of citizens in the process of European integration. Program supports the strengthening of the European identity based on shared values, developing a sense of belonging to the EU: promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens with development of intercultural dialogue. Program is specifically aimed at sharing experiences on issues of interest and learning about the way of life of EU citizens.

7) Lifelong learning programme provides direct support in the field of education, especially in learning and continuing professional development of existing knowledge throughout their lives, regardless of age.

4. Key stakeholders in the use of EU funds for the RE population in Montenegro

It is very important to have a clear view of all parties involved in the process of Roma inclusion in order to make better use of the EU funds for the purpose of improving the position of this population in Montenegro. In addition to the institutional structure created for this purpose, it is important to emphasize the role of NGOs, associations and individuals. The key parties involved in the usage of the EU funds in Montenegro are as follows:

- a) **Office of the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC)** as a part of the General Directorate for Coordination of EU Assistance Programmes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Key responsibilities of the Office are maintaining a close relationship between the beneficiaries of the EU funds and the European Commission, the coordination of programming and monitoring of IPA projects whose implementation is ongoing. Bearing in mind that the NIPAC office is a key part of the institutional structure responsible for the decentralised management of the programming of EU assistance, close cooperation with potential users of funds is crucial for timely and strategic planning and programming of the support.
- b) **Line ministries** are potential beneficiaries of the capacity building policy area for the improving the position of RE population; this primarily refers to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (Department for the promotion and protection of rights of the RE population). The administrative capacities of relevant ministries are still insufficient to cope with the challenges of programming the EU support, especially in light of the novelties introduced with IPA II. Within these ministries, **Senior Programming Officers** – SPOs, are appointed and are responsible for communicating with potential beneficiaries of funds, on one hand, and with NIPAC Office, on the other.
- c) **Operating Structure for IPA Component IV** in Montenegro, which is constituted by Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science.

Operating structure is responsible for the implementation of the Operational Programme and maintaining the close link with potential beneficiaries in the area of human resource development (institutions, organizations, NGOs, associations, unions, individuals). The tight cooperation between the Operational Structure, potential beneficiaries and the NIPAC Office is a key factor for the usage of the funds under the measures regarding the improvement of RE population position in Montenegro.

- d) Roma NGOs, associations and individuals** are the most important factor for the efficient absorption of the EU support in the future. Given the relatively limited capacities of these entities in the preparation of projects, the efficient use of the EU funds is questionable. Raising awareness of individuals, associations and Roma non-governmental organisations on the importance of the EU support and the specific benefits that it may bring and constant capacity building and intensified activities in the field of education are priorities in this area.

5. Effects of the EU support for solving issues of the RE population in period 2007-2013

Given the positive effects of the EU Pre-accession Assistance to beneficiary countries in the period 2007-2013, the European Commission has decided to continue to provide support during the financial perspective 2014-2020 of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II). According to the data base of the EU funded projects in Montenegro⁶, European Union granted total amount of **9.373.028 €** for implementation of projects in the area of economic and social inclusion of RE population. Project beneficiaries have co-financed these projects with total amount of **1.081.946 €**, which makes projects of total value of **10.454.974 €**. These data refer to governmental and nongovernmental sector. Data for the specific projects are cumulated in the following table:

⁶ Available at the official web site of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro

Table 1: EU funded project on national level

Program	Project title	Beneficiary	EU budget (€)	Cofinancing (€)	Total budget (€)
IPA 2008	Comprehensive Support to Refugees and Displaced Persons in Montenegro	Bureau for Care of Refugees, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	1.500.000	70.268	1.570.268
IPA 2011	Identifying Durable Solutions for IDPs and Residents of Konik Camp	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	2.500.000	500.000	3.000.000
IPA 2010	Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform: Enhancing Social Inclusion	Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	2.923.000	335.000	3.258.000
IPA 2013	Identifying Durable Solutions for IDPs and Residents of Konik Camp II phase	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	1.000.000	112.000	1.112.000
IPA 2012	Contribution to the Regional Housing Program – Sarajevo Process	Direct contribution	1.000.000	-	1.000.000
IPA 2007 CSS ⁷	Challenging Education for Roma Inclusion - CHERI	Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro	122.166	23.270	145.436
IPA 2007 CSS	Cross-Sectoral Initiative on Preventive Health and Special Education for Displaced Roma in Konik	Montenegro Red Cross	199.722	27.235	226.957
IPA 2009	Increasing of Internal Displaced Persons Association's Participation in IDP Related Public Policies Development	NGO Kosmet, NGO - Association of the Displaced, Refugees and Expelled Persons in Montenegro	98.140	11.026	109.166
EIDHR 2009	NO to the Charity, YES to the Fight for Accomplishment of Human Rights of REA Disabled Children in Montenegro	NGO Humanitarac	30.000	3.147	33.147
TOTAL			9.373.028	1.081.946	10.454.974

⁷ Civil Society Support

Beside the projects from the IPA 2012 and IPA 2013 programmes for which the contracting process still had not began and projects from IPA 2011 programme where contracting is in the first phase, contracting of funds for other projects shown above is mainly finished and disbursements are made. Comparing the project fiches, which are adopted by the European Commission and reports on evaluations by the European Commission following conclusions can be made in relation to the programming and implementation of projects on national level:

- Although the EU funded projects in the area of integration of RE population were of high importance, concrete effects of these projects on final beneficiaries (which should be namely Roma and Egyptians) are not visible in most cases;
- In the phase of defining project ideas and development of project proposals, project results are often overestimated, and having in mind limited financial resources, are not fully achievable;
- In the phase of programming and implementation of projects, more population-sensible intermediaries (RE civil society organisations, individuals) should be involved;
- Relation of projects with national and the EU strategic documents is often not well defined, which leads to the spending of financial resources for the implementation of activities which do not contribute to the achievement of strategic goals defined in these documents;
- Real problems of RE population were in large scale neglected in the process of the EU support strategic planning, which finally led to the limited possibilities for using the support;
- Timely information about availability of the EU funds often was often not provided to the final beneficiaries and, thus, there was lack of time for preparation of projects within defined deadline;
- Real impact of spending these funds and final effects on living standard of Roma and Egyptians are generally not on the expected level, which opens the issue of further activities for improvements in this regard.

Beside support in the area of tackling issues of RE population which is provided through the EU grants on national level, significant funds are allocated through the Multi-beneficiary IPA for the implementation of regional projects. These projects are prepared on by the European Commission, which is responsible for contracting and disbursement of funds as well. In the period from 2007 to 2013, in the area of the implementation of social inclusion policy, five regional projects were funded. Total value of this support amounts 9.600.000 €⁸; details are indicated in the table underneath.

Table 2: EU funded regional project

Program	Project title	EU budget
MB IPA 2008	Regional programme for voluntary return of refugees in WB countries	1.000.000
MB IPA 2008	Supporting registration of the marginalized groups	1.000.000
MB IPA 2009	Regional program for voluntary return and providing durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the WB countries	1.000.000
MB IPA 2010	Regional initiative for Roma integration	3.000.000
MB IPA 2010	Improving human rights and minority protection in WB countries	3.600.000
	TOTAL	9.600.000

Even though significant amount of funds was allocated for implementation of regional projects, there is a very poor and not visible impact of these projects in Montenegro. Having in mind activities within these projects were implemented on regional level, Montenegrin institutions weren't often properly involved in their implementation. If, in some cases, institutions were involved in project activities, other potential stakeholders were not. Reporting system on project implementation is based on semi-annual reports of the European Commission which are

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm

not efficient enough in terms of monitoring of implementation on national level. It is clear that in the upcoming period, implementation and impact of regional projects must be significantly improved. These improvements should be made as a part of the European Commission activities, as well as by involving of Montenegrin authorities in each phase of the implementation of these projects.

All abovementioned indicates to a necessity of the sustainable planning of comprehensive activities in the upcoming period in order to make the EU funds for Montenegro more focused on sustainable solutions for the issues of RE population (primarily IPA II and other EU external actions instruments). Cooperation of all involved stakeholders in this process will be of a key importance for its success; especially having in mind that management of the EU funds will be the responsibility of Montenegrin institutions in the upcoming period.

6. Possibilities for using the EU funds during the EU financial perspective 2014-2020

Given the positive effects of the EU pre-accession assistance to beneficiary countries in the period 2007-2013, the European Commission has decided to continue to provide support during the financial perspective 2014-2020 through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II). The European Commission has prepared the Draft Regulation for European Council and European Parliament regarding Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for the period 2014-2020 (IPA II)⁹. Principles for using IPA II will be significantly different comparing to the financial perspective 2014-2020. Starting from the legal base to expected rules of application, completing the programming process IPA II brings significant changes. Programming of IPA II will be based on multiannual approach with the focus on preparation of high quality sector documents which will be used as a base for making annual or multiannual national programmes. Documents which will closely define legal and technical base for using IPA II are in

⁹ Brussels, 7.12.2011, COM(2011) 838 final 2011/0404 (COD)

the drafting process and it is expected to be adopted by the EU institutions until the beginning of 2014. European Commission has delivered IPA II guidelines for beneficiary countries, containing instructions for developing initial strategic documents for programming process as well as basic instructions programming process with the application of cross-sector approach. Programming of IPA II assistance for 2014 in Montenegro will be made in parallel with the drafting of strategic programming documents for IPA II which will additionally obligate all stakeholders to involve in this process.

Components of IPA in the concept of IPA II are replaced with the policy areas in order to achieve more impact of support of IPA II as follows:

- 1. Transition Assistance and Capacity Building;**
- 2. Regional Development;**
- 3. Employment, Social Policy and Human Resource Development;**
- 4. Agriculture and Rural Development;**
- 5. Regional and Territorial Cooperation.**

Article 2 of the Draft Regulation for IPA II states that the assistance, among the other, will be directed for the following specific goals (that can be good base for usage of support for RE inclusion policy) in line with individual needs of every beneficiary country and its accessions programme:

- Strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law;
- Promoting and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, improvement of respecting for minority rights, promotion of gender equality, antidiscrimination and media freedom as well as promoting good neighbourhood relations;
- Development of civil society and social dialogue;
- Reconciliation measures, peace promotion and improvement of trust;
- Social and economic inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups.

European Commission has not yet adopted all documents related to the legal base for IPA II which contain all technical details about implementation of the support. Having in mind the current status of the EU integration of Montenegro, it is realistic to expect that in the following seven-year-period, Montenegro will still be the beneficiary of IPA II instrument, without using structural and cohesion funds which will be disposable only after achieving the EU membership. Having in mind the EU budget planning process for the 2014-2020 period in the European Council and European Parliament, one can indicatively conclude that the amount of support for the EU acceding countries will remain approximately the same, which means around 35 million € annually for Montenegro with additional support trough regional support programmes and the EU programmes.

Opportunities for using the IPA II support for RE inclusion policies in Montenegro will mainly depend on the proper and timely strategic planning of support on national level. In this moment, it is important to efficiently respond to the requests related to the strategic planning of support through making Country Strategy Paper (CSP) which will define sectors and priorities that will be supported on national level trough IPA II. During financial perspective 2014-2020, the EU will support only those sector priorities defined within CSP. It should be mentioned that this document will be adopted by the European Commission and that its revision will be possible only in the middle of programming period, which means middle 2017, which additionally obligates all stakeholders to involve in its drafting. This is why it is important to include wide range of stakeholders dealing with Roma inclusion policy in wide consultative process on national level for the purpose of creating quality base for using IPA II funds for this purpose.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Montenegro as a state with constitutionally proclaimed rights on equality of all its citizens will have to dedicate serious efforts in the upcoming period to resolving problems that Roma and

Egyptian population faces. This means creating conditions for inclusion of Roma and Egyptian in social and economic flows of the state. Having in mind that Montenegro is in the first phase of the EU accession negotiation process, the issue of efficient and sustainable solution to RE population problems will be one of the key preconditions for progress in chapters 19 – Social policy and employment, 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights and 24 – Justice, freedom and security. Bearing in mind that implementation of the EU *acquis* is very demanding in the area of social integration and, also, very expensive process, the EU available resources and funds can significantly facilitate resolving of this issue. Based on lessons learned, but also having in mind projections of opportunities in the upcoming period, the following conclusions can be deducted:

- EU support is a good opportunity for funding projects in the area of social care and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro;
- Projects financed in the previous period have not yet given the expected results, which is consequence of inadequate strategic planning of available funding and unreal projection of project results;
- In order to make EU funds more approachable in this area in the upcoming period, it is necessary to include all potential stakeholders (individuals, associations, Roma CSOs, state institutions) in an unique process and setting clear strategy on absorbing sufficient support.
- Capacities of key stakeholders in the process of preparation and management of project cycle are currently very low. Constant capacity building in the area of project preparation and project cycle management must be a key priority;
- Lack of mature projects and project proposals in this area is evident. Identification of projects and its preparation is a very important precondition for accomplishment of higher absorption ratio of the EU funds;
- Creation of base of prepared project proposals would be very useful in this moment, and which shown to be a good practice from neighbouring countries. Prepared projects

significantly increase chances for absorption of funds from different sources of funding, including the EU funds;

- It is important to bear in mind that absorption of the EU funds for RE population is an inclusive process which demands a quality cooperation of all stakeholders involved in the process. This process demands more informal and closer cooperation of state institutions and non-governmental sector;
- Technical support projects in the initial phase of using IPA II would be very useful for capacity building in the area of preparation and proposing projects for financing;
- Involving non state actors in the consultative process of support planning through the IPA II on national and regional level is a key factor for creating a solid strategic base for funds absorption;
- Timely sharing of information about the possibilities for using the EU funds is a precondition for timely preparation of projects and using all possibilities for its financing;
- Involvement of local self-governments in the process and its close cooperation with the non-state sector is an important aspect for resolving concrete problems of RE population on local level;
- Sharing experience and lessons learned in the process of the so-far-used EU funds is a good mechanism for improving efficiency in the upcoming period.

8. Methodology

In a methodological sense, this study and the sources used for its creation, represents a synthesis of so-far-gained experience and data created within field work. All data used are gathered from the official sites of Government of Montenegro, European Commission and Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro. Sources of used data about projects within this study are indicated in the footnotes.